DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 764 HE 033 892

AUTHOR Farquhar, Robin H.
TITLE Towards a Strategy of Teaching Improvement in Universities.
PUB DATE 2001-04-04
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project Symposium on "The Development of the Regional Role and Contribution of Russian Universities in the Context of the Globalization of Higher Education (Salzburg, Austria, April 4, 2001).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; College Role; *Educational Improvement; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; Research; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Canada; Russia

ABSTRACT

This essay considers strategies for the improvement of teaching in higher education, paying particular attention to the Canadian context for examples of practices that might be adapted to the Russian situation. The research functions of universities have come to dominate the basic value system guiding their operation, and the teaching and service functions have been accorded secondary status. This imbalance has been recognized as distorted, and some efforts have been made to redistribute the emphasis so that teaching is being viewed as of more importance. There are many barriers to improving teaching, the glorification of research intensiveness being the most important. Another factor is that typically there is no requirement for university teachers to undergo pedagogical training. The difficulty of assessing teaching effectiveness and the traditional neglect of the instructional role of professors are all barriers to the improvement of teaching. Responses to these problems have generally been focused toward better evaluation, the improvement of professional development resources, and the introduction of requirements that foster the improvement of teaching. These groups of responses indicate that there is a will to overcome the problems that face teaching in higher education, ways can be found to do so. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 764

TOWARDS A STRATEGY OF TEACHING IMPROVEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

By

Robin H. Farquhar

Professor of Public Policy and Administration and Former President

Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Farquhar

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Prepared for presentation at the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project Symposium on

"The Development of the Regional Role and Contribution of Russian Universities in the Context of the Globalization of Higher Education"

Salzburg, Austria

April 4, 2001

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE033893

TOWARDS A STRATEGY OF TEACHING IMPROVEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

It is clear from the "Strategy for Russia" in Education that far-reaching and fundamental reforms have been launched and that, in the university sector, vast changes are envisioned which will result in institutions that more closely resemble those of the West – especially the comprehensive conglomerates in the United States and Canada. So it is worthwhile for us in this Symposium to examine the nature and experiences of these North American enterprises, in order to discover those arrangements that have been found to work well and to learn from those mistakes that should be avoided. I have been asked to undertake one facet of such an examination by considering strategies for the improvement of teaching in higher education, and I shall do so with particular attention to the Canadian context (with which I am most familiar), referring especially to my own institution – Carleton University in Ottawa – for examples of practices that may be helpfully adaptable to the Russian situation; but much of what I shall discuss is true of the North American scene in general.

I shall begin with a background review of the evolution in our universities' roles which led them to a focus much like that of higher education institutions in Russia and elsewhere today, a focus which has lately been questioned. Then I'll discuss the rationales that have influenced the advocates for changing it. Next, I'll outline some of the problems that have made it difficult for us to change our focus in the direction indicated by these rationales. This will be followed by a survey of various approaches that have been taken in response to this challenge and, subsequently, by some comments on certain forms of support which are essential to the success of such responses. And I'll conclude with a few observations on the potential inherent in the circumstances in which our Russian colleagues now find themselves.

Background

American and Canadian universities are commonly viewed as performing three main functions: educating a wide and diverse array of students for many purposes through the process of *teaching*; discovering, transmitting, and conserving knowledge in all academic fields through the conduct of *research*; and helping to solve social and economic problems and improve community and living conditions through the provision of *service*. There is, however, a difference of perspective concerning the relative priorities among these roles; scholars within our universities have traditionally placed their strongest emphasis on the *research* function; members of the general public see them as primarily places where *teaching* takes place; and policy makers look to them principally as sources of expertise for problem solving through *service* in support of governmental and societal aspirations.

Because our institutions (including the so-called "public" ones) typically enjoy considerable autonomy and eschew undue government intervention into the determination of what they do and how they do it, and because they are largely self-governing entities where decisions are reached democratically by bodies composed mainly of scholars who are dedicated to academic freedom, it is the research function that *they* espouse which has traditionally dominated the basic value system guiding the operation of these enterprises. Alternative expectations – for concentration on teaching and service activities – have been accorded *secondary* status. It was not always thus; many of our universities were originally established mainly to educate those destined to become society's leaders, and others were founded to contribute to the advancement of the communities where they were located. But the last century has witnessed a convergence around the advancement of knowledge through *research* as the principal distinguishing feature of

universities in relation to other educational institutions and as the primary basis on which their relative status, quality, and reputation are judged.

For various reasons that I shall review shortly, this imbalance among the three main university functions has, within the past decade especially, become seen as dysfunctionally distorted and some notable efforts have been launched to redistribute the emphasis. Peter McGrath's National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, for example, recently completed a major undertaking to establish a renewed vision for American universities that is both appropriate to the new millennium and respectful of the original mission of these institutions – a mandate to develop and apply academic expertise for the benefit of society at large – and so that Commission's reports are particularly attentive to the need for recapturing the importance of higher education's *service* role. In the *teaching* domain, we find Donald Kennedy as President of Stanford University proclaiming in 1990 that: "It is time for us to reaffirm that education – that is, teaching in all its forms – is the primary task of higher education." And:

> Several years ago, the University of California completed a study of undergraduate education, recommending that more weight be placed on teaching in faculty tenure decisions. In the East, the University of Pennsylvania, in its faculty handbook, now states that "the teaching of students at all levels is to be distributed among faculty members without regard to rank or seniority as such" (Boyer, p. 1).

We Canadians have joined this movement as well. In 1991 the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (when George Pedersen chaired its Board) launched a one-man Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education which provided depressing evidence of the undervaluing of teaching in our institutions. In his report, Commissioner Smith declared that "[i]f university professors are being paid to improve their own knowledge and to engage in scholarly activities, it is primarily so that the teaching they offer to successive generations of

students will be enriched, and only secondarily because society perceives a need for the research findings themselves" (Smith, p. 31). In elaborating on this role, he stated that

> . . . it must be clearly understood that teaching consists of more than lecturing. The ability to hold the interest of an audience during a lecture is very valuable but it is neither necessary nor sufficient as an indicator of good teaching. What counts is learning; good teaching is whatever the teacher does that enhances learning on the part of the student. Much of this has to do with inspiration and motivation. Needless to say, not all subject matter is equally likely to inspire students, and not all students are equally easy to motivate. The ability to motivate students is the largest part of good teaching. Being genuinely available to students after class can be as important as being able to give organized lectures. Knowing how to facilitate discussion, create small group, self-directed learning or how to incorporate students' experiences into the learning materials are all crucially important (Smith, p. 45).

In responding to this report, a Task Force of Canadian university presidents agreed that:

> Learning is a responsibility shared equally by students and teachers.
>
> Universities must recognize that good teaching is vital to good learning. By inspiring and motivating students, good teaching sows the seeds of intellectual curiosity in students. It enhances their ability to analyze and explore complex problems and helps students place what they are learning in the broader context, making them more able to adapt and expand their knowledge to different situations.
>
> We agree with the Commission that university teaching today demands serious attention, particularly in the areas of pedagogical training of university teachers, assessment of teaching performance, and use of information technology (Segal, p. 4).

They went on to concur "with the Commission that universities must adopt a more encompassing definition of scholarship, one which recognizes that there are many ways of acquiring and communicating knowledge – through integration of existing knowledge, through practice and through teaching, as well as through research – and one which brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work and scholarly activity in the university" (Segal, p. 9).

In saying this, the Canadians were aligning themselves with a seminal effort by the American, Ernest Boyer, who in 1990 presented an "enlarged perspective" of university

"scholarship" to include much more than research. He proposed a "new vision" which incorporated *four* forms of scholarship in which professors should legitimately engage:

> the scholarship of "discovery", which "comes closest to what is meant when academics speak of 'research'" (p. 17);
>
> the scholarship of "integration", which "underscores the need for scholars who give meaning to facts, putting them in perspective . . . making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists, too" (p. 18);
>
> the scholarship of "application", which "moves toward engagement as the scholar asks,: 'How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions?' And further, 'Can social problems *themselves* define an agenda for scholarly investigation?'" (p. 21); and
>
> the scholarship of "teaching" which both educates and entices future scholars" (p. 23).

Boyer goes on to define this last form of scholarship more explicitly:

> Teaching is . . . a dynamic endeavour involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject taught . . . . [G]reat teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment. They stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over.
>
> Further, good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners. . . . While well-prepared lectures surely have a place, teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but *transforming* and *extending* it as well. Through reading, through classroom discussion, and surely through comments and questions posed by students, professors themselves will be pushed in creative new directions (p. 24).

His main point is that this form of *teaching* scholarship (along with the others he identified), not *only* research, must be recognized as important and rewarded as valuable in the work of a university professor.

So there has been within the past decade a rejuvenation of interest in the nature and

quality of university teaching, and our Russian colleagues are by no means alone in their concern for improving it. There are several reasons for this renewal of attention, some of which involve the competitive survival of our institutions within the global higher education market.

Rationale

Why is the teaching function now viewed as becoming more important in our universities? At least three categories of reasons are apparent: one is human in nature, a second is curricular, and the third is technological. I'll outline some of the arguments in each of these areas of interest.

First, the needs and expectations of students have been changing. The advent of our knowledge economy has meant that many more people need (and want) access to higher education than heretofore and, as our response through the massification of higher education progresses, a larger number and greater variety of students enter our institutions. The increased enrollment means a growth in class sizes, and different methods of instruction are required to effect learning in large groups than those that are suitable for smaller cohorts; a single professor simply cannot give the same individualized attention to the learning needs of a hundred-plus students as he or she can to those of a score or so, and adjustments must be made in the size and configuration of classrooms, laboratories and libraries, in the use of teaching assistants and instructional equipment, in the approaches to designing course outlines and presenting program content, in the arrangements for testing and grading student achievement, and in various other aspects of the teaching process.

Moreover, this increased participation in university studies brings with it a wider variety of learning needs; there is much more diversity among students in terms of their intellectual abilities

and learning styles, their socioeconomic and ethnic compositions, their requirements for academic support services and course scheduling arrangements, and their purposes in pursuing higher education. Some seek a basic liberal education, some want preparation for employment, and some wish professional upgrading or personal enrichment; some can study full-time and others must maintain jobs or manage households while pursuing part-time studies; some can come to campus but others must engage at a distance; some are naive teenagers while others are mature adults. And learning theory tells us that each of these categories must be taught differently if we are to be successful in our instructional endeavours.

Further, students' expectations for high-quality teaching are rising for several reasons. They know that their education will be more effective if they are actively engaged in the process themselves so they can acquire the skills to pursue lifelong learning on their own after completing their university studies, and relying strictly on the professorial lecture approach will not permit this. Many of them have been exposed to effective uses of instructional technologies in their secondary schools or work sites, and they expect to encounter such advanced methodologies in the teaching they get at university. And as tuition fees are introduced or increased, the students paying them come to believe that they have a right to demand real value in the instruction they receive for the money they spend. So changes in both the needs and expectations of our students have contributed to a growing concern with the quality of teaching on our campuses.

Secondly, advances in knowledge and complexities of understanding have forced a re-thinking of how we organize the curricula of what we teach. Disciplinary specialization has reached a point at which no student can be taught all that is known on a particular subject unless it is so reduced in scope as to be meaningless to all but the most erudite scholars – which is not

what the vast majority of our students are or will ever become. Also, what they *do* need to know in order to understand themselves and the world around them, and to become capable of leading meaningful lives and remaining gainfully employed, extends far beyond the domain of any specialized discipline. Consequently, the programs that we offer must integrate and articulate content from multiple disciplines, they must provide significant opportunities for students to choose among various options in selecting courses according to their particular interests and aspirations, and they must be oriented more toward learning outcomes and demonstrated competencies than to the esoteric canons and arcane methodologies of specialized disciplines. So there is a press toward substantial curricular revision as universities pursue effectively integrative multidisciplinarity. And this must be accompanied by a thorough review of how the new curricula are taught, because instructional approaches are as essential to curricular revision as is content organization. Hence, again, teaching gains prominence in university affairs.

Thirdly, as implied before, both our knowledge about learning behaviour and the availability of technologies to foster it have increased dramatically in recent years. Assuming the necessary financial resources are available, universities can now make creative use of video conferencing, on-line instruction, and multi-media applications to meet a wide array of learning needs and serve diverse educational objectives both on campus and at a distance. They can also employ these technologies to access teaching resources far beyond the boundaries of any single institution so that, through inter-university collaboration and international cooperation, students can be exposed to the best that the higher education world has to offer. To do so, however, requires a great deal of initiative, creativity and expertise on the part of faculty serving as members of instructional teams which include various technical and other support staff as well.

Because the technological capacity for this now exists, and because learning theory tells us that it can be effectively used to help meet the student expectations and curricular needs I've been discussing, universities are obliged to develop the capabilities required to exploit this technology as fully as their resources permit. And this means, fundamentally, the improvement of teaching.

For all of these reasons, then – human, curricular, and technological – the importance of our teaching function has been gaining in prominence. There is, thus, a widespread view that serious attention must be paid to its improvement. But efforts to do so are not without their problems.

Problems

Those who would attempt to improve teaching in universities must be cognizant of several factors that can operate as impediments, beyond the general resistance to change that is characteristic of most human beings and endemic to higher education institutions. Let me briefly review half-a-dozen of them as a sample of the obstacles that we must somehow overcome.

The most fundamental hindrance to teaching improvement is the contemporary university's glorification of research intensiveness that I noted earlier. Most of us would agree that the feature which best distinguishes universities is their combination of both the research and teaching functions within a single institution: the incorporation of research into their mission, with the responsibility to *add* to the store of knowledge as well as transmitting what is known to students, distinguishes them from other educational organizations whose only role is instruction; and the incorporation of teaching into their mission, with the opportunity to disseminate fresh knowledge *as it is discovered* to a new generation of learners and to engage them actively in its

generation, distinguishes them from other research organizations whose singular role is the scholarship of discovery. Most importantly, then, only the university has the capacity to exploit the potential for synergy between these two functions, each of which can (and should) enrich the value of the other.

However, as I have indicated, the balance between these two basic functions became distorted in favour of research during the twentieth century, and the indicators of success in *this* domain are what we traditionally use in judging the quality and according the status that are commonly employed to differentiate between the better and worse universities. Consequently, in the crucial quest for competitive reputation, the teaching function tends not to be viewed as very important.

Secondly, this distortion is directly reflected in the reward systems used to motivate the performance of faculty members – the principal delivery agents in our institutions. Decisions about recruitment and appointment, retention and tenure, promotion and compensation – all tend to be based on indicators of success in the research enterprise – grants received, refereed publications, citation frequencies, etc. Thus, there is little extrinsic incentive for professors to invest their time, energy, and expertise in the improvement of teaching performance since doing so drains resources from their efforts to gain the more lucrative benefits of succeeding as researchers.

Third, there is typically no requirement for university teachers to undergo pedagogical training as there is for instructors at lower-level educational institutions. Rather, an assumption exists in higher education that if one has thorough mastery over the content of instruction then the ability to transmit an understanding of it to students will somehow come naturally – despite clear

evidence to the contrary from pedagogical scholars. Indeed, the study of pedagogy itself tends to be viewed as an inferior form of scholarship within the higher education arena. Consequently, we not only abjure any requirement for training in teaching at universities but we also provide scant resources for instructional improvement to those on our campuses who may wish to pursue it.

Fourth, effectiveness in teaching is simply more difficult to assess than is research productivity – and so we tend to ignore the former in favour of the easier route to performance appraisal. Teaching is a distinctly individual activity, carried out behind closed doors in classrooms where the instructor rules the domain, and so it is deemed invasive for supervisory personnel to even observe it – let alone judge its quality. Moreover, the evaluation of an instructional activity is extremely complex; the principal criterion must be student learning, which can be measured to some extent by various forms of testing, but attributing the learning or lack of learning revealed by test results to the teaching provided by any particular professor is highly problematic since there are so many other personal and situational variables that can influence both student learning and test results. Thus, rather than grappling with this conundrum, or even considering partial and imperfect indicators of teaching effectiveness, there is a tendency to cop out and simply ignore it in our appraisals of faculty performance.

Fifth, because we have traditionally neglected the instructional role of professors, our capability to improve it is very limited. Many faculty members lack the expertise, opportunity, and inclination to explore new teaching technologies and pedagogical approaches with a view to improving their instructional effectiveness, and our universities have provided them with little incentive to do so and have developed few strategies to facilitate it. Consequently, the institutional capacity to foster teaching improvement has been largely absent and, unless changed,

this condition constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to achieving it.

Finally, to alter this condition requires strong commitment and substantial resources. In a circumstance where teaching is undervalued and universities are underfunded, priorities are unlikely to favour the reallocations necessary to accomplish meaningful and sustainable instructional improvement. Such an investment requires a tremendous amount of will, and none of us has an unlimited supply of that commodity. Nevertheless, where there *is* a will there are ways, and I turn now to some of the responses to these problems that have been developed in those institutions that have decided to take the new teaching-improvement route mentioned near the beginning of this presentation.

Responses

As the recent movement toward the improvement of teaching has progressed across North America, numerous strategies to facilitate it have emerged. I'll limit my survey of them to three groups with which I have personal familiarity, so my treatment should be considered as illustrative rather than exhaustive; but it will provide an indication of what is being done.

One group of responses is addressed to the issue of evaluation, based on the assumption that if teaching is to be improved there must be some means of determining what improvements are needed and who needs them. For reasons noted earlier, such efforts to evaluate instructional performance must be recognized as imperfect and, consequently, one must be careful about the uses to which the results are put; no single indicator can be considered as a sufficiently valid and reliable measure of teaching effectiveness to justify making career decisions – such as appointment, tenure, promotion, or compensation – on the basis of it alone. However, a

collection of data in different forms can demonstrate trends which are appropriate to consider (in combination with additional evidence related to productivity in research and other legitimate functions of faculty members) when such career decisions are made; and they can certainly be helpful in formative efforts to diagnose problems and determine approaches to resolving them.

One source of such data is the evaluative commentary provided by supervisors or peers who are assigned to join a professor's class for several sessions during a term to observe the teaching activity and assess its effectiveness according to various criteria agreed to in advance or specified in university policy. Another source derives from the responses to questionnaires on subjects deemed important by the institution; these often include surveys of graduates' satisfaction with the instructional programs they have completed and surveys of employers' satisfaction with the competencies of graduates they have hired. A third form of data that may be considered relevant comprises calculations of student retention and graduation rates, of their success in obtaining employment related to their studies, and of the average time required to complete their degrees.

The most widely used form of teaching assessment involves student evaluations. With these, care must be taken to ensure that the appraisals are not simply popularity contests and that the results cannot be used in the grading of students. The accompanying "Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire" that has been employed for many years at my own university is a simple example of such an approach that is supported by students, faculty and administrators. It must be used in all classes, although students are not *required* to complete it (they do, however, virtually without exception). It asks for ratings on a five-point scale of twelve specified aspects of instructional behaviour as well as a general category of overall teaching performance. At the end of each

course, after the professor has left, a student distributes this form to all students, who complete it on a confidential basis and return it to the student distributor who then takes the responses to the departmental office. The forms from all classes in the department are forwarded to the dean's office where they are machine-read and the scores on each item are calculated and then aggregated for each department and for the school as a whole. Total scores for each course are computed and ranked, and then rankings are provided to departmental, school and university administrators for consideration in conjunction with other indicators of teaching effectiveness. After the students' grades for a course are finalized and recorded, all the evaluation forms from that class are delivered to its teacher, along with a summary sheet indicating his or her ranking on each item (at both the departmental and school levels) by underlining the scores from his or her class without any other designation of which scores came from which classes. Thus, the instructor learns how well he or she was rated in comparison with colleagues whose identities are not indicated, and thereby gains some advice on where improvement is warranted.

Variations on this approach include evaluations that are managed by students' associations rather than as a matter of institutional policy and results that are published rather than restricted to the professors concerned and their administrators, but these alternatives are much more contentious and so we avoid them at my institution. The key considerations are to provide those exposed to someone's teaching with an opportunity to assess its effectiveness and to bring these assessments to the instructor's attention for professional development purposes. A growing number of our institutions now expect their faculty members to include these student evaluations in "teaching dossiers", along with additional items indicative of their work in the teaching domain – course outlines, new curricula developed, instructional handouts, lists of supervisions, multi-

media presentations, testimonial letters, teaching awards, pedagogical articles, peer appraisals, and any other artifacts that they consider relevant to the appraisal of their teaching effectiveness. These portfolios, compiled by the professors themselves, can then be submitted for consideration (along with whatever other evaluative evidence is obtained) by those responsible for their performance appraisal and career decisions.

A second group of responses to the challenge of teaching improvement includes the resources that a university provides to facilitate the professional development of its instructors who want or need it. These are strictly formative in nature and they are usually accessed on a voluntary basis – although in some cases a clearly weak teacher may be required to use them. They include the assignment of mentors – experienced professors who are widely acknowledged as exemplary teachers – especially to beginning instructors; this is a private two-way relationship in which the mentor observes the neophyte's classes and offers suggestions for improvement as well as inviting the latter to his or her own classes for the demonstration of good teaching techniques. Other arrangements, at the institutional rather than personal level, encompass educational leaves, visitation opportunities, reduced loads, competitive grants, technical supports, and retraining programs for the purpose of improving the teaching competence of faculty members; these, of course, have costs but, given the personal benefits derived from them, an argument can be made for some form of cost-sharing between the university and the individuals involved.

The most common and comprehensive form of institutional resource for teaching improvement consists of centres created explicitly for this purpose. These facilities are staffed by experts in university teaching (sometimes as few as one or two of them) and they usually house

collections of books, articles, films, tapes, equipment, and materials concerning instructional approaches in higher education which faculty members can consult at their leisure. More proactively, they offer a number of programs and services that can be very valuable. The one at my institution, for example, pursues initiatives like the following:

- it presents a program of periodic workshops, demonstrations, and presentations on various aspects of good teaching practice, including visiting experts from elsewhere;

- it establishes networks of peer support groups comprising instructors interested in particular aspects of university teaching – such as accommodating diversity in the classroom, electronic communication to foster learning, teaching of large classes, etc.;

- it loans software and other tools for multi-media course authoring;

- it provides devices for automated multiple-choice grading;

- it produces publications, distributes a newsletter, announces conferences, and reviews books on new developments in university teaching; and

- it offers the services of volunteer technology assistants and other advisors to provide individualized consultation for professors with particular instructional problems or interests.

Such a resource centre need not be present in its full form on every campus. We have examples in cities with more than one institution of single centres created to serve all of them on a shared-cost basis, and centres in different cities can access the services and resources of one another through various forms of electronic communication, inter-library loans, joint programming, and exchange programs.

The third group of responses that I'll mention briefly involves the introduction of certain requirements to foster the improvement of teaching. It is becoming increasingly common for academic departments that are hiring new faculty members to require that all candidates, as a part of the selection process, conduct a demonstration class with a group of students in order to

display their teaching proficiency – usually in addition to a seminar presentation on their research interests. It is now typical for graduate students appointed as teaching assistants to be required to undertake some pedagogical training, usually in the form of a one-week intensive course provided by the centre for teaching improvement; indeed, it is not unusual to require that new faculty members do the same. And with the advancements in teacher evaluation noted earlier, there is a growing tendency for institutions to require that professors whose teaching is deemed inadequate enroll in a program of instructional remediation, again normally offered by the university's centre for teaching improvement.

These several groups of responses – in the areas of evaluation, resources, and requirements – indicate that, where there is a will to overcome the problems which beset the improvement of university teaching, ways can indeed be found (and *are* being found) to do so. However, to succeed, they must be accompanied by various forms of institutional support which incorporate them into the centre of a university's ideology rather than leaving them isolated on the periphery where only the most ardent advocates hold sway. So I'll conclude with a few comments on these desirable forms of contextual support.

Supports

Certain features in the environment within which universities pursue their teaching function can, if present, facilitate efforts to improve it. First, it helps if the governmental policy framework within which they operate is supportive of their institutional autonomy to manage themselves. An institution pursuing instructional improvement must be free to determine and revise its own curricula, to appoint and reward its own faculty, and to diversify and allocate its

own revenue. Without such enabling legislation, the university management will be incapable of employing some of the tools that are most useful in the improvement of university teaching – such as:

- restructuring academic programs to incorporate more multidisciplinarity, and exploiting that as an opportunity to upgrade instructional approaches;

- establishing pedagogical competence as a criterion for consideration in selecting, promoting, and compensating faculty members; and

- charging tuition fees, which provide students with the market empowerment of choosing to direct resources where they believe they will be taught best and, thus, justify the administrative allocation of resources accordingly.

It is encouraging to note that the new "Strategy for Russia" in Education seems to endorse this kind of freedom and encouragement to innovate.

Secondly, it is important that university managers take advantage of such liberty to establish institutional policy frameworks which support the kind of responses that were outlined previously. These should take forms like the following:

- a mission statement that accords a managerially endorsed, clearly defined, and broadly communicated priority to teaching excellence;

- an accountability regime that assigns to the deans of schools and heads of departments an explicit administrative responsibility to enhance the quality of teaching in their respective academic units;

- an employment contract or collective agreement that specifies pedagogical proficiency as a performance expectation for all faculty employees and identifies the kinds of indicators and procedures to be used in assessing it;

- a personnel policy that requires candidates for appointment to demonstrate their teaching competence as part of the selection process and designates instructional achievement as an important factor in evaluating differential qualifications for tenure, promotion, salary and other forms of compensation – with some guidance as to the kinds of evidence that can be considered in making such judgments, including a credible system for student evaluation of teaching;

- a requirement that a reasonable proportion of all programs of study consists of optional opportunities whereby students may elect to take those courses which most closely accord with their perceived needs, academic interests, and teaching preferences; and

- a regular system for the periodic review and evaluation of curricula in each department, involving both detailed self-assessments by the units concerned and rigorous appraisals by teams of external experts.

With elements such as these in place, the management of a university will have the policy instruments necessary to promote the improvement of teaching.

Finally, there are various operational arrangements that can be encouraged to enhance the quality of instruction in higher education. Among them are provisions like the following:

- creating centres (possibly in cooperation with other institutions) for the improvement of university teaching to provide assistance of the kinds mentioned earlier, perhaps including the administration of a system for awarding annual prizes in recognition of pedagogical excellence and other types of incentives;

- establishing networks of support units responsible for providing services to nurture the study skills and learning abilities of students and to meet the computing, multi-media, and other instructional needs of professors; and

- advocating the development of inter-institutional structures to stimulate instructional improvement efforts at the regional, national, and international levels – professional associations for the advancement of university teaching, incorporation of pedagogical indicators in the compilation of "league tables" for ranking universities, networks engaged in sharing best practices, benchmarking exercises, personnel exchanges, and the like.

Such stimulative and facilitative arrangements are necessary if the aforementioned policies are to have any realistic prospect of implementation.

Conclusion

Our Russian colleagues have been presented with both a challenging mandate and an exciting opportunity. The "Strategy for Russia" in Education calls for the establishment of

regional university complexes that will coordinate and amalgamate academic resources and focus them not only on pursuing the economic and utilitarian goals of a region but on addressing its social and cultural aspirations as well. As such, it is entirely consistent with the University Project's thematic emphasis on our institutions' social and civic responsibilities. This goal cannot be reached through the research function alone. It is inescapable that the teaching and learning of students – whether they are on campus or at a distance, whether they pursue liberal education or professional development, whether they are youthful scholars or experienced adults – will grow in prominence among the various roles that a university must play. Accordingly, the enhancement of instructional approaches has been appropriately identified as a priority in operationalizing that Strategy.

This mandate accords with the directions that have recently emerged in higher education across North America and elsewhere. I have tried briefly to review the background and rationale underlying this movement, certain problems with which it must cope, some of the more promising responses that have been developed, and various policy and operational frameworks that can support them. I hope that this outline has been of some interest and that it will prove helpful as a source of ideas that might be adapted – and pitfalls that might be avoided – in the Russian context. You have embarked on a monumental venture in which the improvement of university teaching will be crucial. This invests you with an unprecedented opportunity to reform your institutions in ways from which we can all learn to our benefit, because you have a legitimate chance to get it right. So I sincerely wish you every success with it.

Works Cited

Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.

Segal, Brian. *Report of the AUCC Task Force on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education*. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1992.

Smith, Stuart L. *Report: Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education*. Ottawa: AUCC, 1991.

18765

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Arts and Social Sciences
Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire
(Approved by JCAA)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information that will both help in the evaluation of the instructor and help the instructor improve the course.

General Information

Please do not write your name on this sheet

Course Number:

Instructor's Name:

Please list the following information: **(Please print using block, capital letters.)**

a) Your Faculty:

b) Your major subject:

c) Your average grade at Carleton so far: **(Shade in the appropriate bubble.)**

O "A" O "B" O "C" O "D" O "F"

d) Percentage of classes you attended in this course **(Shade in the appropriate bubble.)**

O 0% - 25% O 26% - 50% O 51% - 75% O 76% - 100%

Please answer all of the following questions, by **shading in the appropriate bubble.** (N/A = Not Applicable)

A. How do you assess your instructor's performance	Poor 1	2	3	4	Excellent 5	N/A 9
1. in making clear the objectives of the course?	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. in organizing the course so as to meet the objectives?	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. in imparting the course materials in his/her role as lecturer/seminar leader/tutorial leader/workshop leader/language instructor?	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. in answering questions and/or solving problems related to the course material?	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. in assigning readings, essays, seminar topics, etc., which are relevant to the course?	O	O	O	O	O	O
6. in assigning a workload related to the course objectives?	O	O	O	O	O	O
7. in marking and commenting on assignments and tests fairly?	O	O	O	O	O	O
8. in returning tests and assignments promptly?	O	O	O	O	O	O
9. in being available for out-of-class consultation?	O	O	O	O	O	O
10. in speaking audibly and clearly?	O	O	O	O	O	O
11. in beginning and ending classes promptly?	O	O	O	O	O	O
12. in meeting classes regularly as scheduled, and in missing or cancelling classes only for adequate reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O
B. How do you evaluate the instructor?	O	O	O	O	O	O

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PLEASE WRITE COMMENTS ON REVERSE SIDE

W 98